

MARYLAND RURAL COUNTIES COALTION

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: October 9, 2012 Contact: Ragen Cherney: 301-600-1049

Maryland Rural Counties Coalition Grows to Nine Counties

The Maryland Rural Counties Coalition has expanded now to nine counties. With a unanimous vote today, the Caroline County Commissioners voted to join the Coalition. Previously, on October 2 the Wicomico County Council and County Executive present voted unanimously to join the Coalition.

The Coalition now consists of Allegany, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Dorchester, Frederick Somerset, Washington and Wicomico Counties, representing 919,776 rural Maryland residents.

On December 12, 2011, the governing bodies of Allegany, Carroll, Frederick and Washington Counties announced the creation of the Maryland Rural Counties Coalition with an eye towards other rural counties joining their ranks, for purposes of strengthening their policy-related standing in the halls of Annapolis. Since then, five additional counties have now become members of the Coalition.

Maryland Rural Counties Coalition Chairman and Allegany County President Michael McKay stated, "We are tremendously pleased and honored that Wicomico and Caroline Counties chose to join the Coalition. We look forward to working with the members of the Coalition in our mutual goal to ensure that the unique needs and perspectives of Maryland's rural counties are taken into consideration during the decision making process in Annapolis."

Chairman McKay and former initial Chairman and Frederick County Commissioner Blaine R. Young traveled to Salisbury to meet with the Wicomico County Council and Executive as well as visiting today with the Caroline County Commissioners in Denton to discuss and answer questions regarding the Coalition.

Commissioner Young stated, "The nine counties of our coalition represents more than 900,000 Maryland residents and our collective membership allows our jurisdictions and in turn the citizens of Maryland's rural counties a bigger voice in Annapolis."

"Rural Maryland often finds itself at a strategic disadvantage from policy decisions made by the Maryland General Assembly because the non-rural counties often speak as one, thus prevailing. Our intent is to help balance the decision-making process in Annapolis so rural Maryland's interests are strengthened and equated to the interests of non-rural Maryland. And this can only be accomplished by working together in partnership through a strong alliance between Maryland's rural counties," stated Young.

On October 8, the Coalition held their first Organizational Meeting. Commissioner Young nominated Commissioner McKay to serve as the 2012-2013 Chairman, which passed unanimously with those present.

As the outgoing informal Coalition Chairman, Commissioner Young stated, "Mike McKay has been working side by side with me from the beginning and has put forth the hard work and dedication to move the Coalition forward and to new heights. He is the obvious choice as this Coalition has many great leaders."

Chairman McKay thanked Commissioner Young for his service and for the efforts he has made in getting the Coalition organized. "I fully understand that Mr. Young chose not to accept a nomination to serve as Chairman and is exploring new opportunities and challenges which I know will lead to improving the quality of life for all Maryland residents. I sincerely appreciate his commitment and dedication in continuing as part of the leadership of the Coalition as we continue to build over the coming months and years," stated McKay.